
From: Skahen, Mary (EHS) <mary.skahen@massmail.state.ma.us>
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 4:34 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby re: the FY13 budget

Dear EOHHS Staff,

As you know, Governor Patrick issued his FY13 budget recommendations just a short time ago at the State House (www.mass.gov/governor).

This budget reflects the thoughtful, responsible, and strong leadership that Governor Patrick has consistently provided to the people of Massachusetts, even during very challenging economic times. His budget is a balanced approach to funding state programs and services in FY13, while recognizing that the Commonwealth must live within the resources available. Overall, the Governor's FY13 budget recommends total state spending of \$32.3 billion, which is 2.98% above estimated FY12 spending.

Tax revenues are recovering, but not to the extent needed to support the demand for state services and restore program funding or staffing to levels prior to the economic downturn. Accordingly, this budget has required difficult choices, and we cannot maintain all programs and services at the same levels that state residents have expected in the past. Despite these challenges, the FY13 budget reflects the Governor's commitment to creating jobs and helping people get back to work; closing the education achievement gap and preparing students for tomorrow's jobs; investing in youth development and violence prevention; controlling health care costs while maintaining Massachusetts' national leadership in health care reform; and supporting veterans and their families.

The House 2 recommendation for Executive Office of Health and Human Services agencies is \$15.86 billion, which represents a \$617.1 million (4% increase) over protected FY12 spending. To be sure, there is quite a bit of good news in this budget.

- The Governor has proposed nearly **\$3 million in new funding to support the implementation of recommendations proposed by the Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee** to transform the service delivery system into one that is more accessible, integrated, and family-centered.
- House 2 also continues **\$10 million in youth violence prevention program grants** to support the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative established in FY11.
- The budget also **expands funding for veterans and their family members**, including 100% reimbursement to cities and towns for homeless shelter and transitional housing services for veterans; increases for veterans' annuities; and funding for property tax exemptions for Gold Star families.
- We have **maintained benefits for DTA cash assistance recipients and for MassHealth members**. Also at MassHealth, there are critical investments to support **delivery system transformation** for hospitals and community health centers and to support internal operations necessary to support growing caseloads and the implementation of national health care reform.
- House 2 maintains funding for **autism services**, includes funding for annualization of the **Turning 22 and Rolland programs**, and continues to **support the closure of DDS institutions as part of our Community First initiative**.
- At the Department of Public Health, we have maintained funding in key areas such as **suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention/treatment, HIV/AIDS services, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), and Pediatric Palliative Care**. The Governor has also allocated **\$1.7m for smoking Cessation** to provide services for 4,500 veterans and their family members and funding to seventy-five high schools to decrease the use of tobacco by youths.
- We have also taken important steps to **support the opening of the Department of Mental Health's new Worcester Recovery Center** and Hospital and have **maintained funding for clubhouse services**.
- This budget supports the **implementation of rate reform for Purchase of Service contracts**.
- We have also maintained funding for **Prescription Advantage, Supportive Housing, Protective Services, Congregate Housing and Councils on Aging**.

We have had to make some hard choices in developing a budget that is balanced and responsible. I understand that the reductions we have to make will be difficult. In particular, we will need to reduce Medicaid rates and payments to

hospitals; reduce DPH funding for family planning and teen pregnancy prevention programs, as well as funding to cities and towns for school nurses; delay filling vacant staff positions at DCF; reduce transportation services for DDS clients, as well as respite family supports; make reductions to the Home Maker Program, Turning 22 program and Independent Living Assistance through MRC; reduce funding for the elder lunch program; eliminate the DeafBlind Community Access Network and reduce radio reading services in Western Massachusetts. Despite these and other difficult reductions, we are committed to developing strategies and initiatives that will help mitigate the impact these reductions will have on the people we serve. We look forward to working with you to implement these efforts.

You work hard each and every day to provide our consumers with quality services and supports. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the populations and communities we serve. I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure that our consumers have access to the services and supports they need.

Sincerely,

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.

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